



IMPROVING SOIL QUALITY

Take good care of your soil and it will reward you. Abuse or neglect it and your crops and the environment will suffer.

Eroded, compacted soils cannot produce the bumper crops possible with healthy soils.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE OR MAINTAIN HEALTHY SOILS ON YOUR FARM?

- **Manage organic matter.** Healthy soil contains an abundance of organic matter and living organisms. Practices that increase organic matter include: planting cover crops; choosing crop rotations that include high residue plants; applying manure or compost; using residue management practices, especially no till; and mulching.
- **Use land to its capability.** In the long term, using soils according to what they are most suited is the best way to improve soil quality. This impacts soil erosion, organic matter, compaction and other factors.
- **Maintain chemical balances.** Don't overload your soil with nutrients. Practice nutrient management and maintain or achieve a desirable pH.

- **Avoid compaction.** Excessive traffic or tillage, working soils when wet, or leaving bare soil exposed to heavy rains all cause soil compaction or crusting.

- **Conserve topsoil.** Use conservation measures to control erosion and runoff.



conserving topsoil

Healthy soil is porous and high in organic matter.



healthy soil